Thar express from Jodhpur to Munabao

*351. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS. be pleased to state:

(a) what is the status of the Thar Express from Jodhpur to Munabao;

(b) what steps are being taken to increase its occupancy; and

(c) what are the road blocks, if any?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) It is a weekly train. It runs once a week *i.e.* on every Saturday.

(b) and (c) The Train runs to full occupancy. It caters only to through international passengers with valid travel documents.

Contract farming

*352. SHRI P.R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a working group had been set up by National Development Council for contract farming;

(b) if so, the details including the status of the above and the decisions, if any, as on today;

(c) if so, the details of crops apd regions associated with contract farming, private companies/multinational corporations associated with above contract farming, employment generated/to be generated and diversification of crops adopted, if any, crop-wise, State-wise and region-wise as on today;

(d) whether there is any proposal for State regulation, intermediation and monitoring of contract farming;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (f) The Planning Commission had set up a Working Group of the Sub-Committee of the National Development Council (NDC) on Agriculture and Related Issues relating to Marketing Reforms, Contract Farming and Agro-Processing Sector on 02.12.2005 under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister of Punjab with the Terms of Reference (ToR) as given in the enclosed Statement-I (*See* below).

The Report of the Working Group was discussed in the meeting of the Sub-Committee of NDC on Agriculture and Related Issues on 18.04.2007 and subsequently its recommendations were considered by the National Development Council in its 53rd Meeting on 29.05.2007. NDC has resolved in the meeting that State Governments would encourage development of modern markets by completing the process of amending their Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC) Acts and notify the rules thereunder and would also encourage

development of linkages to markets through a variety of instruments including cooperatives of farmers, contract farming and other means preferred by the States. The process of notifying rules under the amended APMC Legislation is resolved to be completed during 2007-08.

With regard to contract farming, crop-wise and region-wise details, information on employment generated/to be generated and details of adoption of crop diversification are not being maintained by the Ministry of Agriculture. Based on the reports received from the State Governments, contract farming is taking place in 160 hectares in Assam, in only 20 hectares area in Begusarai District in Bihar, in 1924 hectares in Goa, in 2000 hectares in Gujarat, in 1416 acres for basmati rice and wheat through HAFED in Haryana, in 2447 hectares in Mizoram and in approximately three lakh acres in Punjab. In Orissa, the contract farming of cotton is reported to be in 14000 hectares. In Tamil Nadu, the contract farming is reported to be in 1.40 lakh hectares for cotton, 0.93 lakh hectares for maize, 3.44 lakh hectares for sugarcane, 0.20 lakh hectares for Jatropha and 0.03 lakh hectares for oilpalm. As per the reports received from various State Governments, contract farming is not prevalent in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, UT of Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, NCT of Delhi, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. The list of agencies involved in contract farming, as reported by various State Governments, is given in Statement-II (*See* below).

The Central Government had prepared and circulated a Model Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC) Act to the States in 2003 for making suitable amendments in their respective Acts for the implementation of market reforms which included provisions relating to the regulation and monitoring of contract farming arrangements. The Model Act had provisions for the registration of contract farming sponsors and recording of contract farming agreements with the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee or a prescribed authority, protection of title or rights of the farmers over the land under contract farming, dispute settlement mechanism thereon and a model draft agreement suggesting various terms and conditions. By now, relevant provisions have been made by 18 State Governments/UTs in their respective APMC Acts through suitable amendments. In seven States/Union Territories there are no APMC Acts, therefore, there is no regulation of contract farming in such States/UTs. The Model Act circulated by the Ministry is suggestive in nature, and, since Agriculture is a State subject, it is for the State Governments to decide on the regulation, intermediation and monitoring of the contract farming arrangements in their States.

Statement-I

Details of Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Working Group of NDC's Sub-Committee on Agriculture and Related Issues

Market Reforms

(i) To review the status of market reforms in the country and to prepare a road map for its implementation by the States/Central agencies;

(ii) To suggest measures to promote and strengthen commodity based Farmers Organisations for their effective participation in trade related matters;

(iii) To recommend measures for promotion of 'Public Private Partnership' in planning, financing and professional management of terminal markets, including perishable cargo centers;

(iv) To suggest measures to attract large scale investment for the development of marketing and cold chain infrastructure in the country and for modernization of existing markets, wholesale, rural periodic and in tribal areas.

Agro-processing

(i) To examine the present status of agro-processing sector and scope of value addition with emphasis on food processing in different states and at the national level;

(ii) To identity the potential of agro-processing industries at state/ regional level depending upon their resource availability, cost effectiveness and quality competitiveness;

(iii) To study the prevailing policy environment (incentives/disincentives) and constrains, impeding growth of agro-processing sector;

(iv) To identify region specific agri-commodities and value added products, potential markets and their quality standards for export purposes under globalized agricultural trade environment;

(v) To evaluate and promote quality assurance mechanisms to address safety and health issues in domestic and foreign markets;

(vi) To examine and suggest measures for strengthening the infrastructure requirements (such as post-harvest handling, scientific storage, transportation, networking, marketing intelligence etc.) for agro-processing;

(vii) To suggest methods of R and D, human resource capacity building and rural entrepreneurship in the area of agro-processing compatible with national and international requirements; and

(viii) To suggest a road map for the development of agro-processing sector in India.

Contract Farming

(i) To assess the current status of Contract Farming with the view to identifying the lacunae and suggest the appropriate models;

(ii) To suggest an appropriate Legal Framework with dispute settlement mechanism and compensation procedures;

(iii) To devise a system for providing services including quality inputs, technical knowledge, finance and price fixation for the marketable produce;

(iv) To suggest a system of identifying the technologies to be introduced for contract farming with a provision of compensation for any under-performance or failure of the technologies introduced by the sponsors;

(v) To suggest legal, institutional and/or financial measures required for encouraging contract farming arrangements between the farmers and the agro-processing industry/exporters; and

(vi) To identify area specific agriculture commodities suitable for Contract Farming for selected agro climatic conditions.

Statement-II

List of Agencies involved in Contract Farming as reported by the State Governments

(i) Assam: M/s. Kishlay Snack Products, Dewan Patty, Fency Bazar.

(ii) Bihar: Golden Chips Company.

(iii) Goa: Godrej Agrovet Pvt. Ltd., Sanjivani Sahakari Sakhar and Karkhana Ltd.

(iv) Gujarat: Agrocell Corporation, Mecain India Ltd. and Desai Cold Storage.

(v) Haryana: HAFED.

(vi) Mizoram: Godrej Agrovet Pvt. Ltd., Food and Fertilizers Ltd., Ruchi Soya Industries Ltd. and Eco-first India Ltd.

(vii) Orissa: M/s Welspun India Private Ltd., Super Spinning Mill, Amit Green Acre and M/s Eco Farm.

(viii) Punjab: Tata Chemicals Ltd., Pepsi Foods Ltd., Mahendra Shubhlabh Services Ltd., Escorts Ltd., Chambal Agritech Ltd., AM Todd Ltd., Hindustan Liver Ltd., Naranjan Rice Exports Pvt. Ltd., KRBL Ltd. etc.

(ix) Tamil Nadu: Appachi CARE Foundation, Pollachi and Super Spinning Mills, Shiva Textile Ltd. and Cotton Corporation of India for cotton; Suguna Poultry Farm Ltd., Pioneer Hatcheries, Shakthi Chicken Private Ltd. and NAFED for maize; Sugar Mills for sugar; M/s Mohan Breweries and Distilleries Ltd. and M/s Shiva Distilleries Ltd. for jatropha; and M/s Kaveri Palm Oil Ltd. for oilpalm.

Regional cancer centre at NEIGRIHMS

†*353. SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the date on which a decision to set up a Regional Cancer Centre at the North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences, Shillong, was taken and the date on which its foundation stone was laid;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.